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Viewing cable 07LIMA2323, OLLANTA HUMALA - THE BENEFITS OF SOCIAL UNREST

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
07LIMA2323	2007-07-06 23:31	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Lima

Appears in these articles:

<http://elcomercio.pe/>

VZCZCXYZ0000
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHPE #2323/01 1872331
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 062331Z JUL 07
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6086
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 1709
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 4840
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 7443
RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 2964
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0528
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ JUL LIMA
RUEHQH/AMEMBASSY QUITO 1326
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 1371
RHMFSS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 002323

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/24/2016
TAGS: [PE](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [SNAR](#)

SUBJECT: OLLANTA HUMALA - THE BENEFITS OF SOCIAL UNREST

REF: A. LIMA 2000

1B. LIMA 2009

1C. LIMA 2126

...

id: 114649

date: 7/6/2007 23:31

refid: 07LIMA2323

origin: Embassy Lima

classification: CONFIDENTIAL

destination: 07LIMA2000|07LIMA2009|07LIMA2126|07LIMA2236

header:

VZCZCXYZ0000

PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHPE #2323/01 1872331

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

P 062331Z JUL 07

FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6086

INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 1709

RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 4840

RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 7443

RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 2964

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RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ JUL LIMA

RUEHQD/AMEMBASSY QUITO 1326

RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 1371

RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

----- header ends -----

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 002323

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/24/2016

TAGS: PE PGOV PHUM PINR PREL SNAR

SUBJECT: OLLANTA HUMALA - THE BENEFITS OF SOCIAL UNREST

REF: A. LIMA 2000

1B. LIMA 2009

1C. LIMA 2126

1D. LIMA 2236

Classified By: Classified By: A/DCM V. Wunder, for Reasons 1.4 (c,d)

11. (C) Summary: Ambassador Struble paid a cordial farewell call on Ollanta Humala, president of the Nationalist Party of Peru (PNP) on July 3. Humala said the Garcia administration's indifference to Peru's social problems was causing mounting unrest in the country. Humala noted his growing alliance with striking workers, protesting regional defense fronts and other frustrated Peruvians, predicting he would soon lead a broad-based political movement in favor of his goal of radical change. The nationalist leader said it would be bad for the country if Garcia were pushed out of office early, but the President was risking such an outcome by turning his back on electoral promises. Humala admitted his party had experienced growing pains. He lamented the coalition with the UPP and said his nationalists had no interest in proposals by the center-right Unidad Nacional for opposition control of the Congress. Reflecting a continued anti-systemic outlook, Humala said he would not hesitate to walk away from the nationalist Congressional bloc if they discredit his movement. He expressed concern that his reputation had become entangled with the fate of Puno regional President Fuentes because of the latter's strong embrace of Hugo Chavez. Humala said he was trying to rally leftist support for Fuentes and to advise the regional president, but was uncertain whether he would succeed.

(Ambassador's comment: Humala exuded an excited belief that things are moving his way. Many of the movements now flocking to him, however, are opportunists angling for a deal. I expect many of them will be peeled off by the GOP in coming weeks. Humala retains most of the advantages he brought to last year's strong electoral showing -- confidence, conviction, charm, credibility with the poor and a handsome dark face in a country where most national leaders look unmistakably European. He also, however, is still burdened with the same disadvantages. Those include a military-molded personality that demands complete obedience and eschews compromise, association with the locally unpopular Hugo Chavez, and a certain naiveté about the motives of some who rally to his banner. End Comment.) End Summary.

The Cause of Social Unrest

¶2. (C) Ambassador Struble met with Ollanta Humala and his wife Nadine Heredia, the PNP's head of international relations, for one hour on July 3. The tone of the meeting was cordial and open. Humala said social tensions in Peru's interior are rising, prompted by the recognition that the GOP is unable -- or perhaps unwilling -- to fulfill campaign promises to address the social crisis in the countryside. Little had been done, for example, to fix crumbling roads, reform corrupt courts, or address Peru's twin problems of discrimination and exclusion. According to Humala, the GOP had focused instead on advancing the narrow self-interests of the ruling elite; in the words of Heredia, the governing party "was not Aprista but Alanista." Ollanta said that it would not be good for Peru if Garcia were forced out of the Presidency short of term. However, Humala seemed to believe that Garcia was doomed to fall unless he changed his ways.

¶3. (C) Humala cited congressional approval of the PTPA as an example of how the GOP pandered to the rich. Free trade, he argued, benefited only a portion of Peruvian society and created hardships for small agricultural producers. The treaty, moreover, lacked legitimacy in Peru because it was passed without public debate and was the creation of a party -- former president Toledo's Peru Possible -- that had practically ceased to exist.

¶4. (C) Humala saw public frustration at the gap between governmental rhetoric and reality as the fuel for a growing number of protests throughout Peru, with historically inarticulate groups -- workers, campesinos, and indigenous communities -- forming for the first time coalitions across regional, ethnic, and economic lines. In the midst of this ferment, PNP party members were working at the district level to shape a common agenda that would unite protesters into a broad-based political movement. For Humala, GOP dithering in addressing social problems in the mountains and in the jungles was creating an army of potential recruits for the PNP. Nadine Heredia noted that political observers had made much of Humala's failure to win regional presidencies in the November 2006 regional/municipal elections. She suggested that the various regional "defense fronts" leading strikes and protests now underway in the jungle and highlands represented popular power. They were seeking out Humala, as were some regional Presidents, the striking miners in Casaplaca and other aggrieved groups. She predicted that they would coalesce into a new national opposition led by Humala. Both Ollanta and Nadine were visibly excited by these strikes and protests

The Problem of Governance

¶5. (C) Humala admitted that organizing and administering a national political party was hard work,

and he said that "criticizing is one thing, managing another," as evidenced by the fate of fellow radical Hernan Fuentes, regional president of Puno. Humala said Fuentes faced stiff challenges in delivering good government in Puno -- a lack of talented technocrats, regional infighting, and a restive and extremist Aymara community -- but Fuentes had made the situation worse. Though Fuentes was not elected on the PNP banner, Humala admitted that nationalists would be tarnished by the Puno President's failure; Fuentes strong embrace of Bolivarianism (reftels A and D) and Hugo Chavez led many people to identify him with Ollanta. (Humala said that his own identification with Chavez was exaggerated, though he added that he admires the Venezuelan leader and considers him a friend.) Humala said that he would soon meet with Fuentes to advise that he spend more time fixing broken public services. Humala had also called Jose Quintana, who lost to Fuentes by only one percentage point, to urge that he help Fuentes in the name of leftist solidarity; there was too much bad blood between the men, though, and a rapprochement seemed impossible.

¶16. (C) Humala said that the PNP erred by aligning with the Union for Peru (UPP) after the 2006 elections. The UPP was better organized and more experienced than the PNP and represented both groups in the Congress' governing body. UPP used those advantages to mislead and betray the PNP, pushing the nationalist agenda to the side. Relations were much better now that the parties had ended their formal coalition. As a result of the earlier experience, Humala said, he was completely disinterested in proposals by the center-right Unidad Nacional that the opposition form a joint slate to take the Presidency of Congress. What do we have in common with Unidad Nacional?, he asked rhetorically. Humala recognized that the PNP could fall prey to the same public discontent directed at the traditional parties and said he would not hesitate to walk away from his deputies if they discredit the movement. All the same, he argued that only the PNP offered a genuine ideological choice within the Peruvian Congress and predicted that the PNP's focus on grass-roots organization would prevent his party from ignoring broad sectors of the society.

Radicalism not Extremism

¶17. (SBU) Humala characterized himself as a radical, but not an extremist, defining the two terms as follows: A radical believes the status quo is unjust but offers concrete proposals to remedy the situation. An extremist likewise believes society is unjust, but only tears down and does not seek to build up. Ollanta reiterated his support for free elections and democracy. He said he had a positive political program that sought, for example, to redefine the relationship between the state and foreign capital and to promote economic development -- as long as regulations protecting the environment and the rights of workers were enforced. In his view, the GOP's counter-narcotics program needed to be redesigned to find markets for legal coca, a solution that would undercut the appeal of both the Shining Path and narco-traffickers. If those kinds of reforms were not made, extremist groups -- who oppose any kind of economic development -- would grow stronger. Humala maintained that he was not anti-US -- though he opposed aspects of US policy -- and that he recognized the preeminent role the US plays in Latin America.

¶18. (SBU) Comment: Humala's sweeping analysis of Peruvian politics sometimes stumbled over facts. The Ambassador pointed out, for example, that the PTPA had been debated extensively in congressional committees. Humala's claim that regional protests are coalescing also is suspect and ignores both the wide difference over goals in disparate social movements and the government's

success in addressing local complaints (see septel). Humala's endorsement of electoral democracy was welcome, but there may be more than a little opportunism in his stance: many observes suspect he has already been eclipsed in the nationalist movement by his brother Antuaro, whose political platform is racist, violent, and anti-democratic (reftels B and C). The Humala family remains an important force within Peru's radical left, and the Humalas have shown a willingness to talk to Embassy officials. Post plans to continue to take advantage of their garrulousness. End Comment.

STRUBLE

=====CABLE ENDS=====